

APA North Carolina
Chapter Strategic Work Plan

2024-2028

FEBRUARY, 2024

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Five Year Strategic Plan

Mission Statement

APA-NC promotes equitable, healthy, and prosperous communities across North Carolina through professional planning leadership, advocacy, and education.

Introduction

This document guides the work and strategic focus of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association over the next five years, beginning in January 2024. The purpose of the plan is to identify priorities and set the strategic direction for the many activities and initiatives undertaken by the Chapter and its committees.

The North Carolina Chapter (APA-NC) has a long history of strategic planning. The most recent strategic plan covered a four year time period from 2018 – 2022. In order to keep the plan up to date and relevant, it should be revisited and updated on a two year cycle, with an update during the first year of the new Chapter President’s term.

Background

Long-range planning is a required activity for all APA chapters under the adopted Chapter Performance Criteria. Chapters must plan as a chapter over a five-year time horizon to remain in good standing with APA national. Historically, APA-NC has used an annual work plan in conjunction with a longer-range strategic plan. This document blends those approaches.

Strategic Plan History

2014 – 2017 Strategic Plan

This strategic plan launched two new initiatives: Planning for Prosperity (PfP) and a Chapter-level CPAT program (Planning Assistance Resource Team, or PART). PfP held several high-profile events around the state covering the preferences of the millennial generation, small-scale manufacturing, and farm-to-table economics. PART successfully completed one assignment but became dormant due to insufficient resources and relaunched as NCPAT in 2018 with its own committee. Other successful efforts from the strategic plan included greater leveraging of Great Places in NC and securing two Plan4Health grants.

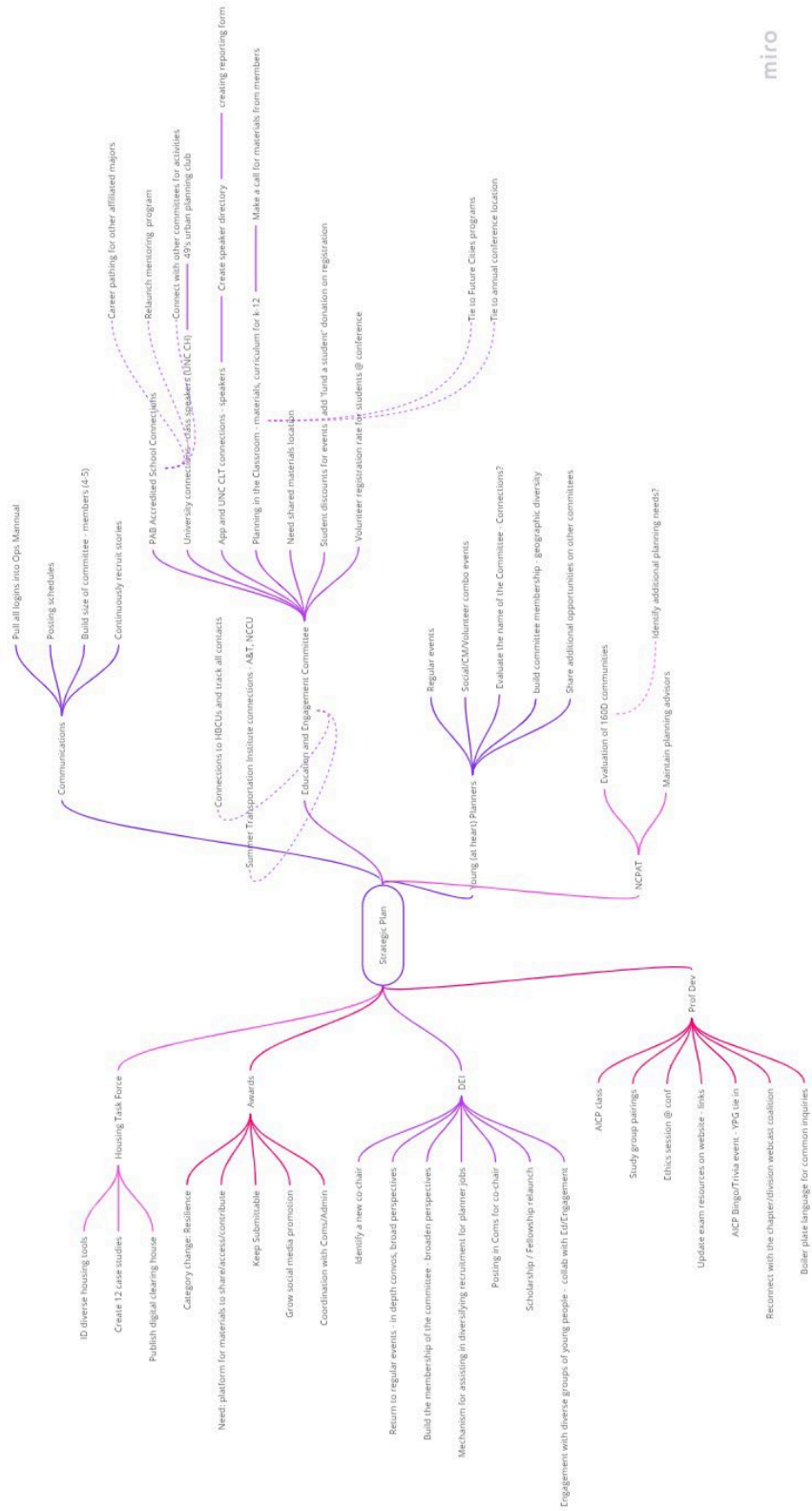
2018-2022 Strategic Plan

This strategic plan provided focus and direction for the chapter, including an updated Mission Statement, formalizing Plan for Health and the relaunch of NCPAT. During this period several changes occurred: Plan for Health was brought to conclusion as grant funds were spent out. Planning for Prosperity was concluded. As the chapter wrestled with the impacts of the global pandemic, the sections program was dissolved and a renewed focus emerged on equity and diversity at the chapter and national level.

2024-2028 Strategic Plan

The scheduled update of the Chapter's strategic plan was delayed due to the uncertainty brought by the pandemic. New initiatives in this plan include the creation of a standing Fellows Committee. During the 2023 Executive Committee Retreat, each component committee contributed to a virtual mapping exercise to identify priorities and expected areas of focus for the coming five year period. The results of this exercise are capture here.

Mapping Exercise



Strategic Priorities and Work Plan, 2024 – 2028

Affordable Housing

APA-NC will serve as a resource for data, defining the problem and potential solutions that can be implemented in NC as well as a source of advocacy for enhanced local authority. Many local jurisdictions in NC have done great work on this topic; their findings and best practices should be broadly shared. APA-NC can also work with partners to dispel myths about affordable housing, such as adverse impacts on property values or increases in crime, neither of which have been observed in rigorous studies.

Goal: Position APA-NC as a leader and source of best practices on affordable housing statewide.

1. Identify diverse housing tools in use throughout North Carolina, up to 12.
2. Develop case studies of each housing tool with task force volunteer support.
3. Publish case studies in a clearing house on the APA-NC website

Administration

The administrative unit includes all elected positions and the Chapter Administrator.

Goal: Provide consistent leadership and support for the Executive Committee.

1. Finalize transition of administrative duties to new administrator
2. Prepare annual report for membership to distribute at the conference
3. Select and transition conference planning contract
4. Maintain operations manual and essential support services like Submittable, Whova, etc.
5. Maintain the website in collaboration with Communications
6. Maintain the active member list (updated monthly)
7. Maintain compliance with all APA National chapter requirements
 - a. Annual budget and IRS filings
 - b. Strategic Plan
 - c. Regular chapter meetings

Awards

The Committee administers the annual APA-NC Awards Program including the NC Great Places Awards and Marvin Collins Planning Awards.

Goal: Provide meaningful opportunities for members to share and recognize the places, people, and projects that embody planning excellence. The Committee administers the annual APA-NC Awards Program including the NC Great Places Awards and Marvin Collins Planning Awards.

1. Add Resilience category to 2024 awards
2. Develop a schedule for regular social media posts, eblasts and newsletter stories for winners
3. Coordinate activities with Communications and Administration

Communications

Communications provide critical connections between the Chapter and its members.

Goal: Ensure members receive timely, accurate and useful information from and about the Chapter.

1. Recruit committee members
2. Develop a schedule for regular social media posts, eblasts, web posts and newsletters
3. Regularly review and maintain the chapter website in collaboration with Administration
4. Continuously recruit for stories to share

Chapter Development

The VP for Chapter Development works closely with each local conference committee, the Chapter Administrator and the Conference Planner to deliver the annual state planning conference.

Goal: Delivery a successful annual chapter planning conference.

1. Maintain written conference policies and guide
2. Conduct RFPs to identify conference locations 3 years ahead of schedule

Diversity & Equity

APA-NC plays an important role in making relevant diversity and equity training available to its members. NC is becoming more diverse with each passing year, but this diversity is not reflected within the planning profession. The concept of equity should be deeply embedded in the work of planners and the chapter.

Goal: Promote diversity in the profession and equity in planning practice.

1. Broaden the diversity of the committee by recruiting committee members with broad perspectives
2. Provide access to formal planning projects and initiatives that will serve to bolster the resume, qualifications, and professional planning skill and experiences for members of traditionally disenfranchised identity groups.
3. Develop methods to support diversity in the recruitment process for planning positions in NC
4. Relaunch the Chapter Diversity Scholarship and Fellowship program

Education and Engagement

Engagement between professional planners and students in grade schools and universities is a critical part of growing the profession, increasing the diversity of professional planners and raising the level of understanding and appreciation for planners and planning among NC residents.

Goal: Engage students of all ages to expose them to the work and impact of professional planners.

1. Strengthen connections to PAB Accredited university programs
 - a. Relaunch the mentoring program
 - b. Provide career pathing support for students in affiliated, non-planning majors
 - c. Collaborate with other Committees on activities
 - d. Support student planning clubs

2. Establish connections to HBCUs
 - a. Connect to Summer Transportation Institutes at NCCU and A&TSU
3. Establish a speakers directory for schools
 - a. Create a reporting form for planners to share when they have engagements
4. Relaunch Planners in the Classroom
 - a. Call for materials from membership
 - b. Connect to the Future Cities program
 - c. Establish connection to annual conference locations
5. Support student involvement in the activities of the chapter
 - a. Establish a student discount policy for events
 - b. Establish a volunteer discount for events
 - c. Establish a method to ‘fund a student’ through donations during event registration

Fellows Standing Committee

In 2023, the Chapter established a standing committee to develop a pipeline of candidates from the chapter for nomination to the AICP College of Fellows.

Goal: Identify and support chapter members seeking nomination to the College of Fellows in a continuous fashion.

1. Establish committee chair and working framework for Committee
2. Coordinate recruitment with VP for Professional Development and Past President
3. Recruit and support Fellows candidates.

Legislative

The Legislative Committee supports members through legislative engagement at the state level on specific issues important to planners. In 2018, the Legislative Committee developed its first free-standing strategic plan which will be updated in 2024. The goals and actions below are sourced from that plan.

Goals: Inform and equip North Carolina planners to better participate in the legislative process; build lasting relationships with strategic partners and the General Assembly in pursuit of beneficial planning legislation; serve as an objective source of information on the anticipated impacts of proposed legislation; raise awareness of the value of planning in North Carolina communities; and provide assistance to planners and local governments in adapting to changes in planning-related legislation.

1. Track and report on pending state legislation during session.
2. Prepare 2-page briefings on key topics for legislators
3. Collaborate with affiliated organizations on shared items of legislative interest
4. Collaborate with APA National and other state legislative representatives on issues of national interest to the membership.

NCPAT (Planning Assistance Team)

The Planning Assistance Team relies on chapter volunteers providing pro-bono expertise and support for planning efforts to support sound planning in communities with limited resources.

Goal: Support ongoing planning needs of North Carolina's smallest communities.

1. Conduct evaluation of PlanNC 160D community planning efforts
2. Maintain engagement with current planning advisors
3. Recruit additional volunteers

Professional Development

The Professional Development Committee ensures members have affordable and accessible opportunities to gain and maintain AICP certification. Collaborates with the VP for Chapter Development and other committees.

Goal: Support members in their efforts to gain and maintain AICP Certification.

1. Recruit committee members
2. Update exam resources on website
3. Coordinate ethics sessions at the annual conference
4. Establish standard response language to common inquiries
5. Maintain connections to the Mid Atlantic Collaboration and Chapters and Divisions coalition
6. Collaborate with other Committees to engage young people and young planners
 - a. AICP Bingo
 - b. AICP Trivia

Resiliency

Planners have an important role to play in planning for both hazard mitigation and disaster recovery. APA has an entire division devoted to this topic: Hazard Mitigation and Disaster Recovery. As the state's focus on resiliency continues to mature, APA-NC will serve as a resource for solutions that can be implemented in NC as well as a source of advocacy for the inclusion of resiliency practices in communities across the state.

Goal: Increase chapter involvement in hazard mitigation and disaster recovery planning support.

1. Contribute webinar sessions and speakers as part of the Mid-Atlantic Chapters webinar series
2. Amplify funding opportunities for resilience planning activities

Young Planners

Engagement of emerging professional planners is a critical part of sustaining the profession and growing chapter volunteers.

Goal: Engage young and emerging professional planners in the life and work of the Chapter.

1. Expand committee membership with geographic diversity in mind
2. Host regular events that include socializing, certificate maintenance credits and volunteer activities
3. Collaborate on events with other Committees